

# Nipmucs lose bid

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WASHINGTON — When it comes to casino gambling in Connecticut, the Pequots and Mohegans have the monopoly, at least for now.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs denied two separate requests for federal recognition by two competing bands of the Nipmuc Indians, who are based in Massachusetts but own some land in Connecticut along the Massachusetts border, in Thompson.

The Sutton, Mass.-based Has-sanamisco band of Nipmucs failed to meet four of the seven

necessary criteria for recognition, while the Webster-based Chaubunagungamaug band failed to meet three criteria. The ruling is final but can be appealed to the Interior Board of Indian Appeals.

Both groups had previously been denied recognition by the BIA.

State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal issued a press release in which he praised the BIA for its decision, but called for reform in the recognition process.

**"This final decision is a mile-  
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stone victory," Blumenthal said in the release. "It provides respite, but no final remedy. The remedy is reform — overhauling the recognition process which we will continue to pursue."

U.S. Rep Rob Simmons, R-2nd, said in a release that he was pleased by the ruling.

"It seems the BIA has gotten the message sent by me and others from Connecticut that we will

not tolerate any more arbitrary recognition decisions that are determined more by casino dollars than evidence and regulations."

Simmons said, however, he's introduced legislation on behalf of the state's congressional delegation that would put the seven tests for recognition — which are merely guidelines — into law.

*Radio and television reports were also included in this story.*